

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: ANDREA WILKINSON, PRINCIPAL PARKING PLANNER, T&ES

SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 3, 2010 MEETING – PARKING UPDATE

Several items relating to parking are currently being addressed by City Council. These items include multispace meters, a Council Work Session on parking, parking meter rates, and the proposed “All May Park, All Must Pay” policy.

Multispace Meters:

Staff is in the process of writing a Request For Proposals for the purchase and installation of approximately 125 multispace meters to replace over 1,000 single-space meters in the Old Town area. The request for \$1.25 million to be reallocated from the surplus balance in the Metro subsidy fund was approved by Council on September 14 for this purpose. Staff expects the installation of the multispace meters to be completed in April 2011. Installation of multispace meters is expected to increase parking meter revenue by approximately 40%. Through this increase, the City expects to recoup the cost of the multispace meters within two years.

Council Work Session on Parking:

At the October 12 Council Work Session on the recommendations of the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group, City Council heard a summary of the discussions and issues that were addressed by the Work Group, and held a discussion of the final recommendations (which were submitted to the Transportation Commission as part of the October 6 docket). City Council received the recommendations and spoke on several of the issues. They discussed the need for consistency in meter operational hours throughout the Old Town area and the need for a parking study in the greater residential area of Old Town to address inconsistencies in parking regulations. Council also agreed that parking information and its distribution to the public should be improved, and they positively received information on implementation of a public valet service. In response to recent complaints from the business community regarding the need for quarters in the coin-only meters with the current meter rate of \$1.75 per hour, Council directed staff to bring forward information on options for and revenue implications of a decrease in parking meter rates at the October 26 City Council legislative meeting.

Parking Meter Rates:

On October 26, City Council reviewed 13 options for decreasing parking meter rates, which ranged in a loss of revenue from \$44,450 to \$549,000, with a fourteenth option of leaving the meter rates at their current rate of \$1.75 per hour. After discussion, Council passed a motion to reduce parking meter rates to \$1.25 per hour at coin-only operated meters, but keep the multispace meters operating at the current rate. This results in an estimated loss of revenue of \$324,000, assuming the rates will return to \$1.75 in April 2011 when the replacement of single-space coin-only meters with multispace meters is complete. The first reading of the ordinance will occur at the November 9 City Council legislative meeting, with a public hearing, second reading, and adoption of the ordinance scheduled for November 13. New rates would likely be effective as of December 1.

“All May Park, All Must Pay”:

City Council voted on May 3 during the budget adoption meeting to accept a change to the proposed General Fund operating budget based on implementation of an “All May Park, All Must Pay” policy. This policy would require holders of handicapped placards or license plates to pay meter fees when parked in a parking meter zone. Currently, holders of handicapped placards or license plates are exempt from parking meter fees for up to four hours. Implementation of this policy was supported by recommendations in the Old Town Area Parking Study and was also recommended by the OTAPS Work Group. Staff recommendations are in accordance with the Work Group recommendations as follows:

1. Two percent of metered spaces throughout the Old Town area shall be designated as disabled only parking;
2. Four-hour single-space meters shall be installed at designated handicapped spaces;
3. Options to allow four hours of parking for the disabled shall be available at general use spaces;
4. Multiple payment options shall be available at designated handicapped spaces;
5. Options such as in-vehicle payment devices and pay-by-phone shall be explored; and
6. A waiver program for low income disabled residents shall be implemented.

Implementation of the technologies necessary to achieve the above recommendations will need several months for completion. The recommendations also require the complete installation of multi-space meters throughout the meter zones. As the installation of multi-space meters is estimated for completion in April 2011, staff recommends that the “All May Park, All Must Pay” policy become effective on May 1, 2011. Implementation of the “All May Park, All Must Pay” policy at the meter rate of \$1.75 will result in a projected revenue of \$133,000 per fiscal year.